1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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It is not pretended that this division of social customs into three different kinds is of any great or permanent value, and it is only introduced as an aid to the exposition of the customs of the Andamanese. It will be argued in a later chapter that many of the customs described in the present chapter have a common psychological basis.

Of any customs in connection with the birth of children I was able to learn very little, as no births at which I could be present occurred during my stay at the islands. Earlier writers have given very little information on this subject.

During the latter part of the period of pregnancy, and for about a month after the birth of the child, the mother and father must observe certain restrictions. In particular there are certain foods that they may not eat. The statements of different informants on this matter did not quite agree with each other, and it seems that there were slightly different rules in different tribes. According to an *Akar-Bale* informant the man and woman may not eat dugong, honey and yams; they may eat the flesh of small but not of full-grown pigs and turtle. An informant of one of the Northern tribes said that the woman may not eat full-grown pig, *Paradoxurus*, turtle, dugong, the fish *komar*, monitor lizard, honey and yams; her husband may eat these things but must carefully avoid eating certain fishes.

The natives give two different reasons for these rules. One is that if these foods be eaten by the parents the child will be ill. The other is that the parents themselves will be ill. The latter is the explanation most commonly offered.

The baby is named some time before it is born, and from that time the parents are not addressed or spoken of by name. For example, if the name chosen be *Rea*, the father will be spoken of as *Rea aka-mai* (Rea's father) instead of by his own name. The mother may be referred to as *Rea it-pet*, from the word *it-pet* meaning "belly." This practice is continued till some weeks after the birth, when the use of the names of the parents is once more resumed.

In child-birth the woman is assisted by the matrons of the camp. She is seated in her hut in the village on fresh leaves, and a piece of wood is placed at her back for her to lean against.

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The youth then returns to his hut and resumes his former position. He may now, if he wishes, talk to his friends and he may sleep. He must retain the bundles of *Hibiscus* leaves and the necklace and belt of *Pothos* leaves. The dance is sometimes repeated in the afternoon. It is in any case repeated on each of the two days following, and after that the youth resumes his ordinary life. For a week or two he may not touch a bow and arrow. The *Pothos* leaves are worn till they are faded and are then discarded. The paint on the body wears off and is not renewed, but his ears are kept painted with red paint. For some weeks the youth is supposed to be in an abnormal condition and is carefully watched by his friends.

At the turtle-eating ceremony a new name is given to the youth. This name, however, never seems to be used afterwards either in speaking of or to the person to whom it belongs. A youth of the *Aka-Jeru* tribe whose birth name was *Čop* (from a species of tree) and whose nick-name or second name was *Komar* (from a species of fish) had two new names given to him on the occasion of the turtle-eating ceremony, *Čokbi-čiro* (meaning turtle-liver) and *Pilečar* (high-tide). Neither of these names was ever used in addressing him.

The turtle-eating ceremony is called in the Northern tribes either *Čokbi-jo*, *Čokbi-kimil*, or *Kimil-jo*. The word *čokbi* means "turtle," and *jo* means "eating." The word *kimil* is more difficult to translate. With the prefix *ot-* or *er-* it means "hot" as in *T'ot-kimil-bom*, "I am hot." From the time of the commencement of the ceremony the youth or girl is said to be in a condition denoted by the word *aka-kimil*. During this time, i.e. during the ceremony and for some months afterwards, he or she is not addressed or spoken of by name but is referred to as "*Kimil*," the word being thus used as a term of address or a substitute for the personal name. A person who is in this condition is described as *aka-kimil-kolọt*. (Before the ceremony the youth is *oko-taliŋ-kolọt* and the girl is *aka-ndu-kolọt*.) In the *Aka-Bea* tribe the turtle-eating ceremony is called *Yadi-gumul* or *Gumul-leke*, *yadi* being the word for "turtle" in that language, and *leke* being the equivalent of the *jo* of *Aka-Jeru*, that is "eating." A youth or girl who is passing or has recently

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as an essential part of the ceremony. The female relatives of a youth or girl who is being initiated come and weep over him or her at the turtle-eating ceremony. Their friends weep over, or with, the mourners at the dance at the end of mourning. The friends of a bride and bridegroom weep over them when they are married. The friends and relatives weep over a corpse before it is buried and over the bones when they are recovered. In all cases it is real weeping. The man or woman sits down and wails or howls, and the tears stream down his or her face. On one occasion I asked the natives to show how it was done and two or three of them sat down and were immediately weeping real tears at my request. The weeping in this way is really a ceremony or rite. When two friends or relatives meet who have been separated from one another for a few weeks or longer, they greet each other by sitting down, one on the lap of the other, with their arms around each other's necks, and weeping and wailing for two or three minutes till they are tired. Two brothers greet each other in this way, and so do father and son, mother and son, mother and daughter, and husband and wife. When husband and wife meet, it is the man who sits on the lap of the woman. When two friends part from one another, one of them lifts up the hand of the other towards his mouth and gently blows on it.

Reference has already been made in this chapter to a number of customs relating to personal names. It will be useful to bring together the scattered references, and give a general account of the whole matter.

Every Andaman Islander has a personal name that is given to him or her before birth, and which we may speak of as the birth-name. As soon as a woman realises that she is pregnant, she and her husband begin to think of a name for the child. The name is selected by the parents, but the suggestions of their friends and relatives are always considered. It is regarded as a compliment to name the child after some man or woman. Sometimes a man may request the parents that the child shall be named after him, and such a request is rarely, if ever, refused. The names given before birth are of course applicable to both sexes, there being no difference between

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551 the names of men and those of women. There are a considerable
•553 number of names in common use, but some of them are more popular at a given time and place than others. It therefore happens that there are several persons, both men and women, bearing the same name.

551 Each of the names in common use has a meaning, but it is not always easy to obtain an adequate and accurate explanation of the meaning from the natives themselves[1]. In a certain number the derivation is obvious. Many names are the names of objects such as trees, fish or other animals, or even such objects as rope or mats. A few examples from the North Andaman are:—

Buio	*Mucuna sp.*, a plant with edible beans.
Bol	*Hibiscus tiliaceus.*
Čop	a tree with edible nuts.
Konmo	*Dioscorea sp.*
Čokbi	turtle.
Maro	honey.
Meo	a stone.
Čeo	a knife.
Pani	the oriole.

In the case of a number of names it is not possible to discover with certainty the derivation, and the statements of the natives regarding them do not always agree. Such names in the North Andaman, with their meanings as stated by the natives, are:—

Kea	one who turns in his sleep.
Boičo	one who wrestles.
Elpe	one who comes and goes.
Kijeri	one who walks backwards and forwards.
Nimi	one who catches hold.

Some time after a child is born it is given a nick-name. Nick-names may be given at any time of life, and some persons may have several nick-names given to them at different times. New nick-names are from time to time invented, but there are

[1] Mr M. V. Portman gives a list of personal names in use in the South Andaman in his *Notes on the Languages of the South Andaman Group of Tribes*, p. 70. The derivations of many of the names as there given, are, however, of doubtful accuracy.

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a certain number of recognized names from which a choice is usually made. A few examples from the North Andaman are :—

Ra-t̪ot-beṭč	pig's hair.
Renya-čope	much baggage, or many possessions.
Poičo-tomo	the wood (literally flesh) of the *Sterculia* (*poičo*) tree.
Lau-tei	spirit blood.
Luremo	rope.
Remu-toi	a piece of iron.
Čokbi-čiro	turtle liver.
Tarenjek	angry.

During childhood boys and girls are addressed by either the birth-name or the nick-name.

When a girl reaches the age of puberty she receives a new name. This is one of a limited number of names, each of which is the name of a tree or plant. The name given to the girl is that of the tree or plant that is in flower at the time of her first menstruation.

There is a succession of trees and plants flowering one after another throughout the year. The natives describe the different parts of the year by reference to the plants in flower at the time. The plants selected as typical of the different seasons all have flowers from which the native bees make honey. Each of them has a distinctive scent and gives to the honey made from it a distinctive flavour. The flower-names are given below in *Aka-Bea* and *Aka-Jeru*.

Aka-Bea	Aka-Jeru	
Čilipa	*Čeliḃi*	From the middle of November to the middle of February.
Moda	*Mukui*	From the middle of February to the middle of May, in order.
Ora	*Okor*	
Jidga		
Yere	*Jeru*	
Pataka	*Boṭek*	
Balya	*Puliu*	
Reče	*Re*	From the middle of May to the end of August.
Čagara	*Čokoro*	
Čarapa	*Čarap*	September, October and the first half of November.
Čenra	*Torok?*	
Yulu	*Jili*	

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551 From the time that a girl receives her flower-name her birth-name and nick-name fall entirely out of use. No one would
553 address an unmarried girl by any name except the flower-name. This continues until some time after the girl is married. Properly speaking a woman should be known by her flower-name from the advent of puberty until after the birth of her first child. In these days of childless women the flower-name drops out of use after a few years of married life. After the birth of her first child the woman is known by her birth-name or by a nick-name. Thus a woman who was named before her birth *Kaba* (from *kaḇal*, a species of mangrove) was called by that name until puberty; thereafter she was called *Jili* (her flower-name) until the birth of her first child; after this event she is again called *Kaba*, and no one would think of addressing her as *Jili*. A woman named *Ele* (lightning) at birth was known by this name until puberty, and thereafter was called *Bǫtek*. When I knew her she had been married for three years or so, but had not had a child. A few of the younger men and women addressed her as *Ele*, but the older people still called her *Bǫtek*. If she should bear a child, the name *Bǫtek* would fall entirely out of use and she would be known as *Ele* by both her juniors and her seniors.

In the case of a boy there is nothing corresponding to the flower-names of girls. He continues to be known by his birth-name and his nick-name from the time he is born until he dies. During adolescence a youth has to pass through certain ceremonies of initiation as described in the present chapter. At the turtle-eating ceremony the youth is given a new name, of the nature of a nick-name. The name given in this way is never used either in addressing the youth or in speaking of him. It is possible that he also receives a new name on the occasion of the pig-eating ceremony, but of this I am not sure. Though girls pass through the same ceremonies as boys, I did not discover whether or not they also are given new names on these occasions.

551 Names are used freely in speaking of and to one another. An older person always speaks of or to the younger one by the name alone. When a younger person is speaking to an older one it is customary and polite to use one of the terms of address,

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

129 torches for hunting by night. There were pigs everywhere. In half an hour we often got
114 six or more of them. At Chemalê, far from the coast, we had eleven in a few minutes for
[134] distribution to everybody, including roaming Onge. Pigeons and ducks also were often plentiful. The simple pleasures of hunting incited everyone to a spontaneous daily struggle through the dense forest; and so, every month, I managed to carry out many times the work I could have done had I not kept all the men glad to follow me. On seven different occasions I spent 162 days in Little Andaman, out of a total of 634 days altogether in the Andamanese Archipelago – all of them given up to Onge research. These trips are recorded
128 in Port Blair Government offices. A few details on the subject are published in the "Bul-
114 letin of the Department of Anthropology", Government of India, starting in Vol. II, No. 1, 1953 (issued in 1956) and extended to other issues. Such papers were hurriedly prepared by me while I was halting in Calcutta on my way from the Andamans to Europe. Press proofs could never be submitted to me; there are, consequently, many misprints, particularly in the figures relating to my Onge Census. The misprints are so obvious that they could only influence a most biased critic: to be discussed in future papers and while my Onge book is in preparation. In Port Blair (South Andaman) I started an Onge Museum with material collected by me. I had the honour of inaugurating it on 6 July, 1953 in the presence of the Chief Commissioner for Andamans and Nicobars, Mr. A. K. Ghosal, one of the kindest and most intelligent Indian gentlemen that it was my pleasure to meet in Asia. On 9 March, 1954 Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD, President of the Republic of India, also visited the Museum. On that occasion I introduced to him 30 of my Onge friends (wives, husbands and children) in their most natural attire. The President questioned me at length on Onge anthropology and ethnology with the pertinence of a specialist.

123 While in Little Andaman I tried to study all possible aspects of Onge life. I also
[121] tried to count the natives: a very difficult task for they are a nomadic people, ready to vanish into the jungle at any moment. Often I was surrounded by them without seeing a single one. In the darkness of their jungle, the small, black, naked Onge easily disappear. They see us but we do not see them. They can only be counted in their sleeping quarters
[361] in communal huts; even so, results are misleading. I found a number of communal huts
[126] in the interior regions of Little Andaman, whereas previously they were said to exist
[178] only on the coast. The larger, more solidly built huts are in the forest. With the help
[361] of my Indian assistants I obtained plans and photographs of all the huts that I saw. Unfortunately the number of Onge communal huts is rapidly diminishing – a very significant fact. Many are in ruins, many more completely destroyed. Only kitchen-middens
[124] and occasional clusters of planted bamboo indicate their former location. Through an interpreter, and with two Onge speaking a little Hindi, I was able to gather information on these and other matters. Direct observation, however, proved the best way of gaining knowledge. In some places there was nothing to help me, and I was compelled to guess about communal huts whose inmates chose to hide in the jungle. Of the many personal
[551] names that I collected I must say that they are reliable only for a short period: the Onge
[553] like to change their names from time to time. All this, in addition to the Onge's nomadic way of life, causes great confusion and makes a proper Census almost impossible. Frequent changing of names also hinders the establishment of genealogies. Furthermore, the Onge
[597] custom of adopting children shifts many of them from one family to another, and adoptive parents invariably claim them as their own offspring. The parents themselves, who are ignorant of numbers, not infrequently forget how many children they have, who these children are and where they are located. It was almost useless to follow previous information concerning communal huts; and so I decided to consider mainly the situation
[114] existing at the time of my visits. The result of my Census may be imperfect, but before criticizing it it would be advisable to know the conditions that prevail in anthropological work among the Onge. Something more than merely counting people, anyhow, was achieved by me in Little Andaman.

In this short paper I am pleased to present a peculiar aspect of Onge life, an aspect that these innocent and once hostile people did not attempt to hide from me, though they also told me nothing about it. Only direct observation could help, and it involved pro-

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

262 and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted
123 fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our
[975] good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was
[825] stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals.
Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the
513 different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and
123 uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

262 With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the
114 fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its
[832] lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe
261 they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs
252 only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are
[231] cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health
266 and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is
262 completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young sucking-pigs are avoided, as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surround-
[888] ing fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I
123 helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they
553 found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cue-changhēghē*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

262 Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several
751 succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very
[825]

7:Sarkar D-4, 5 (1948) 1960 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

and seven with those of the 1911 Census. The total number of twenty existing huts, however, agree in both CIPRIANI's map and the 1911 Census map; only names differ. It would have added greatly to our knowledge had CIPRIANI based his investigations on the 1911 Census map and commented on each of the place names given therein. He also mentions two huts in ruins besides eleven "no more in existence". There is no mention of any newly built hut. All this proves the decadent condition of the Onges. The coastal huts are probably more numerous than those within the jungles and their total number appears to be constant both in 1911 and in 1953.

The Onges have, in recent years, been visited so many times by anthropologists that a well-directed effort could have brought the whole population into a few genealogies — an elementary task in anthropology.

Postscript. — CIPRIANI has now (1959) published[1] the Census figures of the different communal huts. Instead of clarifying the earlier anomalies stated above, his recent population figures have raised further complications, as will be discussed below.

CIPRIANI now (1959) mentions in a footnote on p. 89 of his paper that 125 individuals, comprising 48 adult males, 44 adult females, 22 boys and 11 girls, have *beds in different communal huts*. He gives a total population figure of 394 (130 adult males, 129 adult females, 65 boys and 70 girls) obtained by actual Census from 21 communal huts. To this total figure of 394 he adds another total of 175 individuals (adult males and females 74 each, and 27 children, the latter shown as "males" on p. 90 but as "siblings" on p. 74) estimated for another 7 communal huts. Thus according to a Census of 21 huts and an estimate of 7 others, CIPRIANI now finds a total Onge population of 596, in comparison to his earlier variable figures stated above. There is no attempt to explain the discrepancies in the population figures. It is also unknown why the population of the 7 huts could not be censused, although all of them were visited between March 22 and April 4, 1953.

It is now apparent that his method of Census of the Onges is untenable since about 31.7 % (125 out of 394) of the population have beds in different communal huts. This is in harmony with the roving nature of the Onges, but it shows that only about one third of the population is migratory and about two thirds sedentary. This is probably not true for the Onges. At least, the fixed nature of beds in the communal huts loses its significance and is probably an uncertain criterion for an Onge Census.

As to a recalculation of the Census figures for each of the 21 huts, it is seen that the total population appears to be 382 (129 adult males, 126 adult females, 64 boys and 63 girls) instead of 394 given by CIPRIANI. This definitely shows high masculinity not only among adults but also among the children. With an adult population of 129 males and 126 females the sex ratio works up to 50.6 % males and 49.4 % females, the excess of 1.2 % being statistically significant.

In the present publication CIPRIANI has published personal names of 133 adult males and 140 female adults, but the Onge habit of frequently changing names, mentioned by him on p. 70, has not been substantiated. Since the same issue of the journal contains an anthroposometric study of the Onges, in which names of the individuals measured were noted, it would have been worth while testing how far the Onges practise the above custom. As will be obvious from the foregoing as well as from this P. S., CIPRIANI has not started with the known to unravel the unknown.

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[1] L. CIPRIANI, A Survey of Little Andaman during 1954. Bull. Dept. of Anthr. 3. 1959, pp. 66-94.